

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 PM-03 DODE-00 PRS-01 EB-03 AID-10

COME-00 AGR-03 RSR-01 /067 W
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R 142330 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1784

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGAPA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 2783

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR NU, HO

SUBJECT: VISIT OF HONDURAN AMBASSADOR TO NICARAGUA, MOISES
LOPEZ MALDONADO.

1. THE AMBASSADOR OF HONDURAS TO NICARAGUA , MOISES LOPEZ MALDONADO, VISITED ME IN MY OFFICE AT HIS REQUEST ON THE MORNING OF JUNE 12, 1973. AMBASSADOR LOPEZ WHO APPEARS WELL INFORMED ON CENTRAL AMERICAN MATTERS BEGAN BY SAYING THAT HE WAS EXTREMELY CONCERNED BY WHAT HE SAW AS THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN HONDURAS. THE AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THAT IN THE SMALL COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA HE FELT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THERE BE AN IDENTIFIABLE LEADER CAPABLE OF LEADING THE ENTIRE COUNTRY AND THAT IT WAS HIS OPINION THAT GENERAL OSWALDO LOPEZ HAS REPRESENTED SUCH A FIGURE IN HONDURAS, BUT THAT HE WAS RAPIDLY LOSING THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF POWER WHICH MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO LEAD AND THUS PLACING HIM SERIOUSLY IN DANGER OF NOT ONLY LOSING HIS LEADERSHIP ABILITY BUT IF NO IMPROVEMENTS OCCURRED BY SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER, HE MIGHT WILL BE OVERTHROWN BY DISSIDENT FORCES IN HONDURAS.

2. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE REASONS THAT HE WAS DESIROUS OF DISCUSSING THIS VERY SERIOUS " SECRET AND DELICATE MATTER" WITH ME WAS THAT HE FELT THAT THERE WERE ONLY TWO INDIVIDUALS WHO
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COULD HAVE EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE ON GENERAL LOPEZ; ONE BEING THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN HONDURAS, AND THE OTHER BEING GENERAL ANASTASIO SOMOZA OF NICARAGUA.

3. AMBASSADOR LOPEZ SAID THAT FORMERLY THE TOTAL AND ABSOLUTE POWER OF GENERAL LOPEZ HAD BEEN BASED ON THE TACIT SUPPORT OF BOTH THE NATIONALIST AND LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP; THE SUPPORT OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY OF HONDURAS, AND THE UNQUESTIONING LOYALTY OF THE HONDURAN ARMED FORCES. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME LOPEZ DID NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF EITHER THE NATIONAL OR LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP FOR THE VERY SIMPLE REASON, ACCORDING TO HIM, THAT THROUGH PRIDE OR PERSUASION BY OTHER FORCES, HE HAD REFUSED TO ASK FOR THEIR SUPPORT (HE INDICATED THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF BOTH PARTIES WERE PREPARED TO STRONGLY SUPPORT LOPEZ, BUT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY IGNORED BY THE GENERAL SINCE HE RECENTLY TOOK POWER).

4. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GENERAL'S ATTITUDE AND HIS APPARENT PASSIVE INDIFFERENCE TO THE TAKEOVER OF PRIVATE PROPERTY BY THE CAMPESINOS AND BY OTHER ACTIONS WHICH HAD MADE THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY EXTREMELY NERVOUS.

5. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE CAMPESINOS WERE BACKED BY THE UNION, BY THE STUDENTS, AND BY THE CHURCH, ALL OF WHICH WERE MORE OR LESS LEFTISTS IN THEIR ORIENTATION AND NONE OF WHICH PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR ANY REAL ACTIVE POWER POSITION FOR LOPEZ. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION OVER THE HANDLING OF DECREE #8 OF THE AGRARIAN LAW, WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE CAMPESINOS TO OCCUPY THE LAND WHICH THEY HAD TAKEN FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS, OF COURSE, EVERYONE WAS WONDERING BY WHAT MEANS THE CAMPESINOS WOULD BE REMOVED AT THE END OF THE TWO YEARS; IF FORCE WAS USED THIS WOULD CREATE CHAOS AND EVERYONE QUESTIONED IF THE CAMPESINOS

WOULD LEAVE THE LAND VOLUNTARILY.

6. AMBASSADOR LOPEZ SAID THAT THE LOYALTY OF THE ARMED FORCES OF HONDURAS TO GENERAL LOPEZ WERE ALSO NOW COMING INTO QUESTION. HE STATED THAT THE AIR FORCE WAS ALMOST ACTIVELY DISLOYAL AND WAS NOT, IN HIS OPINION, EFFECTIVELY UNDER THE CONTROL OF GENERAL LOPEZ. HE SAID THAT IN THE ARMY, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUNGER
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OFFICERS, THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF DISSATISFACTION AND INDEED DISLOYALTY, BASED ON APPARENTLY A FEELING THAT GENERAL LOPEZ WAS FAILING TO LEAD, AND SECONDLY THAT GENERAL LOPEZ WAS RULING IN AN ILLEGITIMATE MANNER BY HAVING FAILED TO CALL A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OR AN ELECTION OR SOME OTHER FORM OF "LEGITIMIZING"

HIS PRESENT STATUS AS CHIEF OF
STATE. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT, IN HIS VIEW, IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE
TO THE ARMED FORCES TO HAVE GENERAL LOPEZ RULE HONDURAS
WITHOUT ANY LEGITIMATE (LEGAL) BASIS FOR A PERIOD OF 5 YEARS.

7. THE AMBASSADOR FURTHER SAID THAT MANY OF THE YOUNGER OFFICERS
IN THE ARMY AND A VERY LARGE NUMBER IN THE AIR FORCE, HAD PICKED
UP MANY OF THE VIEWS OF THE " PERUVIAN MILITARY" AND THE " IDEAS
OF TORRIJOS OF PANAMA" AND WERE BECOMING MORE AND MORE ULTRA-
NATIONALISTIC AND LEFTIST INCLINED. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT NO
ONE WITH WHOM HE HAS SPOKEN IN HONDURAS COULD UNDERSTAND THE
FAILURE OF ACTION ON THE PART OF GENERAL LOPEZ, BUT THAT THE SITUATION

WAS FAST REACHING A CRITICAL POINT.

8. AMBASSADOR LOPEZ SAID THAT THE UNIVERSITY WAS COMPLETELY
COMMUNIST- DOMINATED, THAT APPARENTLY LOPEZ WAS ATTEMPTING TO
BUILD A POWER BASE BY APPEASING THE CAMPESINOS AND IGNORING THE
TRADITIONAL PARTIES AND THAT THE CAMPESINOS REPRESENTED NO VIABLE
POWERE BASE WHICH COULD BE USED AS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR RULING
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ACTION ARA-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 PM-03 DODE-00 PRS-01 EB-03 AID-10

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R 142330 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1785

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

S E C R E T FINAL SECTION OF 2 MANAGUA 2783

LIMDIS

HONDURAS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE ARCHBISHOP OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TEGUCIGALPA WAS " A WELL- MEANING. DECENT AND

STABLE INDIVIDUAL BUT THAT HE WAS VERY WEAK" AND THAT THE FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC PRIESTS WERE VERY LEFTISTS AND WERE ATTEMPTING TO USE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS A BASE FOR BRINGING ABOUT DRASTIC AND REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES IN HONDURAS.

9. THE AMBASSADOR FURTHER SAID THAT GENERAL LOPEZ WAS HAVING EXTREME DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS WIFE AS A RESULT OF HIS INTEREST IN OTHER WOMEN, THAT HIS HOME LIFE WAS EXTREMELY CHAOTIC.

10. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE MINISTER OF LABOR IN THE GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS. WHILE POSSIBLY NOT A REGISTERED COMMUNIST, WAS VERY CLOSE TO BEING ONE AND THAT THE MILITARY RESENTED THE LEFTISTS TINGED TECHNOCRATS WHICH LOPEZ HAD MADE MINISTERS AFTER THEY (THE MILITARY) HAD USED THEIR POWER TO PLACE LOPEZ IN HIS PRESENT POSITION. HE INDICATED THAT THE ARMED FORCES WERE STRIVING TO ACHIEVE A CABINET MADE UP OF MILITARY OFFICERS " A LA PERU."

11. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THERE WAS NO GOVERNMENT IN HONDURAS EXCEPT GENERAL LOPEZ, AND THAT LOPEZ WAS A MAN OF GREAT ABILITY WHO COULD BE AN EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE LEADER OF HIS

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COUNTRY, BUT THAT HE WAS NOT EXERCISING HIS LEADERSHIP AND WAS RAPIDLY LOSING THE ABILITY TO LEAD DUE TO THE FALLING AWAY OF SUPPORT AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

12. AMBASSADOR LOPEZ SAID THAT, IN HIS OPINION, IT WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE WITH EL SALVADOR UNTIL GENERAL LOPEZ HAD BECOME " LEGITIMIZED" AND THUS IN A POSITION TO TALK ON LEGITIMATE EQUAL TERMS WITH PRESIDENT MOLINA OF EL SALVADOR. HE STRESSED AGAIN AND AGAIN THE POINT THAT THE HONDURAN PEOPLE, BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN FOUND THE PRESENT STATUS OF LOPEZ UNACCEPTABLE AND ONLY DESIRED HIM TO TAKE LEGAL MEASURES TO HAVE HIMSELF MADE A LEGITIMATE PRESIDENT.

13. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT GENERAL SOMOZA WOULD FIND THE TIME TO TALK TO LOPEZ BECAUSE LOPEZ RESPECTED GENERAL SOMOZA AND LISTENED TO HIM. HE SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY GENERAL SOMOZA, PREOCCUPIED WITH THE REBUILDING OF MANAGUA AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE, HAD LESSED THE NUMBER OF CLOSE DISCUSSIONS WITH GENERAL LOPEZ, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY THAN ANYTHING ELSE, ACCORDING TO AMBASSADOR LOPEZ, WAS THE INFLUENCE WHICH COULD BE EXERTED. HE FELT, BY THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN TEGUCIGALPA. HE SAID THAT LOPEZ RECOGNIZED THE NECESSITY OF THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND WOULD BE WILLING TO LISTEN ATTENTIVELY TO ANY VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR.

14. AMBASSADOR LOPEZ REITERATED THAT UNLESS LOPEZ TOOK SOME ACTION WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, HE FELT THAT THE SITUATION WAS

DETERIORATING MSO RAPIDLY THAT LOPEZ WOULD BE FACED WITH THE
PROSPECT OF BEING OVERTHROWN BY EARLY AUTUMN.

COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY I HAVE NO BASIS ON WHICH TO JUDGE THE VALIDITY
OF THE COMMENTS OF AMBASSADOR LOPEZ. THEY ARE BEING PASSED
ON FOR WHATEVER USE THEY MAY HAVE IF ANY AS TO THE THINKING THEY
REPRESENT.
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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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